

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

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USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PARM, MBFR
SUBJECT: PRAVDA DISCUSSES LATEST MBFR PROPOSALS

SUMMARY: PRAVDA PUBLISHES ON JUNE 27 AN ARTICLE BY
A. PETROV (POSSIBLY A PSEUDONYM) ON MBFR UNDER THE
HEADLINE "TO LEAD NEGOTIATIONS OUT OF THE IMPASSE."
THE ARTICLE CRITICIZES MOST RECENT WESTERN PROPOSALS
AND DESCRIBES ELEMENTS OF EASTERN PROPOSALS OF
JUNE 8. IT CONCLUDES BY QUOTING BREZHNEV THAT
EVERYTHING NOW DEPENDS ON THE POLITICAL WILL OF THE
WEST. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE FIRST EXTENDED SOVIET COMMENTARY ON MBFR
IN MANY MONTHS, PETROV REVIEWS RECENT WESTERN AND
EASTERN PROPOSALS AT VIENNA. HE OPENS BY DESCRIBING
THE NECESSARY TERMS FOR AN AGREEMENT: REDUCTIONS ON
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THE BASIS OF EQUAL PERCENTAGES AND EQUALITY OF NUMBERS,
WHICH ARE TO BE MADE BY FORCES WHICH NOW ENJOY
NUMERICAL PARITY. TOTAL FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE,
ACCORDING TO PETROV, ON JANUARY 1, 1976 WERE AS FOLLOWS:
WEST--981,000, EAST--987,300, WITH THE GROUND FORCES
ACCOUNTING FOR 791,000 AND 805,000, RESPECTIVELY.
IT WILL BE "IMPOSSIBLE" TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON

FORCE REDUCTIONS, ACCORDING TO PETROV, "WITHOUT RECOGNITION" OF THIS SITUATION, I.E., OF ALLEGED NUMERICAL PARITY.

2. PETROV DESCRIBES THE APRIL PROPOSALS OF THE WEST AS A "VERY SMALL" STEP AND CRITICIZES THEM AS ENABLING ONE OR ANOTHER COUNTRY TO ADD TO ITS FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND AS OBLIGING THE USSR BUT NOT THE U.S. TO WITHDRAW ENTIRE UNITS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE. PETROV THEN DISCUSSES THE RECENT NATO MEETING IN WASHINGTON AS EVIDENCE OF WESTERN LACK OF SERIOUSNESS IN ARMS CONTROL.

3. PETROV DESCRIBES THE EASTERN PROPOSAL OF JUNE 8 AS A TWO-STAGE REDUCTION OF GROUND AND AIR FORCES TO 900,000 MEN OF WHICH 700,000 WOULD BE GROUND FORCES. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD NOT PERMIT ANY STATE TO ADD TO ITS FORCES AND IT WOULD MANDATE REDUCTIONS SPROPORTIONATE TO THE SIZE OF EACH NATIONAL FORCE. UNDER THE PROPOSAL, MOREOVER, THE USSR WOULD BE REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW DIVISIONS, WHILE THE U.S. WOULD BE OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW BRIGADES AND OTHER UNITS BUT COULD NOT WITHDRAW MERELY INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS. IN THE FIRST STAGE, SOVIET AND U.S. FORCES WOULD BE REDUCED IN NUMERICAL PROPORTION TO THEIR OVERALL STRENGTH. PETROV CONCLUDES BY QUOTING FROM BREZHNEV'S JUNE 25 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SPEECH IN MINSK, INCLUDING THE PASSAGE STATING THAT ALL NOW DEPENDS ON THE POLITICAL WILL OF THE WEST.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF MBFR OFFERED THE SDVIET READER IN A LONG TIME AND REVEALS A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF DETAIL ABOUT THE SOVIET POSITION. PETROV REINFORCES THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED BY BREZHNEV AT MINSK THAT MOSCOW IS INTERESTED IN MOVING THE VIENNA TALKS TO A MORE ACTIVE PHASE AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN MOSCOW'S DIPLOMATIC POSITION IN EUROPE. PETROV'S CONDEMNATION OF THE NATO SUMMIT AND OF THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM SUGGESTS FURTHER THAT MOSCOW IS WILLING TO TAKE STEPS IN VIENNA IN ORDER TO BLUNT THE EFFECTS OF NATO FORCE MODERNIZATION. TOON

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